

VIRGINIA WILDLIFE

MAY 2001

ONE DOLLAR





Director's Column

William L. Woodfin, Jr

From time to time, I try to point out events that will peak the interest of most of our readers. One such event that occurred recently is known as FalconTrak. This program was launched by Dominion (previously Dominion Resources) in an effort to reintroduce the peregrine falcon to Virginia. While there have been several previous attempts to achieve the reintroduction of falcons, FalconTrak is certainly the most high tech approach. This approach involves a process known as hacking, which is basically raising young falcons in a cage until they are able to fly and hunt on their own. The theory is that when they mature, the birds will return to the site where they were hacked.

What makes FalconTrak so innovative is that Dominion has brought together the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, NASA, Northstar Science and Technology, the Center for Conservation Biology at William & Mary, the U. S. Park Service, and our agency. The birds that will be hacked this summer will be fitted with transmitters that are tracked by satellite; for the first time, we will be able to follow and understand the patterns and locations of the birds. This program is so high tech that the transmitters are state-of-the-art solar powered devices that are expected to last up to five years. Three satellites will track these birds and all partners will be able to daily determine the status and location of the falcons. Additionally, both Dominion and our Department's web sites will allow anyone to also track and follow the falcons.

At its kick-off in March, school children from a local elementary school were involved in the project. They were taught about the lifestyle of the peregrine



falcon and how it became endangered, as well as the efforts that are underway for it to make a recovery. Hopefully, these children, through their school, will be able to track the birds that are hacked and will have a lifelong learning experience about the ways of mother nature.

It is through programs such as FalconTrak that we are able to introduce our citizens to a greater understanding of wildlife issues. From the youngest child to the oldest citizen, we are only a click away on the web to learn about these majestic birds. If we are able to educate ourselves about wildlife such as the peregrine falcon, then we are better able to understand how and why human interaction with wildlife is important. Please feel free to use Dominion's web site at www.dom.com or our web site at [www.dgf.state.va.us](http://www.dgif.state.va.us) to learn more about FalconTrak. Also, when you have the opportunity, please consider congratulating Dominion for such an innovative and thought-provoking approach in dealing with an exciting wildlife issue.

On another subject, don't forget that May 19-25, 2001, is National Safe Boating Week. Boating is fun, exciting, and a wonderful way to spend time in the outdoors. Whether you float one of our interior rivers in a canoe or cruise one of our large waterways on a motor or sailboat, I hope you will do so safely, while at the same time having fun. Even though our boat accident numbers are steadily improving, one accident is an accident too many. If you haven't already done so, please consider taking a safe boating course through the U. S. Coast Guard Auxiliary, the U. S. Power Squadrons, or our Department. All of these organizations have excellent boating safety programs, and you can access the list of available courses from our web site mentioned above. Have a safe boating season, and remind yourself and fellow boaters to BE RESPONSIBLE, BE SAFE AND HAVE FUN.

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Virginia Wildlife (ISSN 0042 6792) is published monthly by the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries. Send all subscription orders and address changes to *Virginia Wildlife*, P.O. Box 7477, Red Oak, Iowa 51591-0477. Address all other communications concerning this publication to *Virginia Wildlife*, P.O. Box 11104, 4010 West Broad Street, Richmond, Virginia 23230-1104. Subscription rate is \$10.00 for one year, \$24.00 for three years; \$1.00 per each back issue, subject to availability. Out-of-country rates are the same but must be paid in U.S. funds. To subscribe, call toll-free (800) 710-9369. Postmaster: Please send all address changes to *Virginia Wildlife*, P.O. Box 7477, Red Oak, Iowa 51591-0477. Postage for periodicals paid at Richmond, Virginia, and additional entry offices.

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VIRGINIA WILDLIFE

Cover: Large flowered trillium (*Trillium grandiflorum*),
photo © William Lea.

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The Bird M

Dr. Mitchell Byrd

After 40 years as one of Virginia's foremost wildlife biologists, Dr. Mitchell A. Byrd can truly say his career has soared like the birds he has devoted his life to studying.

story and photos by Tim Wright

An animal carrier, a plastic box usually associated with dogs and airlines, sits just off a mountaintop trail in Shenandoah National Park. A ratty towel, draped across the top of the box and hanging down to cover its jail-like door, serves the double purpose of preventing the curious from peering in and the frightened from peering out. Inside, a young peregrine falcon is unaware that it is about to be set free.

Ornithologist Dr. Mitchell A. Byrd gingerly approaches the box. As Byrd delicately lifts the towel aside, the bird becomes excited. Gently, Byrd kneels and in a slow, fluid motion opens the door. Despite his good intentions, the falcon ignores Byrd's softly spo-

ken words of reassurance and resists his outstretched hands.

When Byrd stands a moment later, the winged hunter is gently, but firmly, cradled in his heavily gloved hands. Byrd pauses to study the falcon, with a mixture of professional interest and genuine awe, before carrying him down a series of rock ledges to the release site. Carefully placing the bird on a ledge, Byrd scampers back up the rocks with an agility that belies his age. With binoculars in hand, he perches on another nearby ledge and settles down to watch his latest release. As the falcon begins its first flight, fatherly concern is deeply etched



in Byrd's face. Hours are spent scanning the skies above the Shenandoah Valley until the falcon returns.

Few people give the world of conservation the time and

energy that Mitchell Byrd has given throughout his long career.

From his home in Williamsburg, Byrd has commuted from the ocean to the mountains in efforts to restore some of Virginia's most endangered birds. In summer, he can be found climbing channel markers with the ease of a cat to count osprey chicks. In winter, he's in an aircraft flying at dangerously low altitudes to count active bald eagle nests. In

the spring, he's releasing peregrine falcon chicks. The rest of the year he serves on numerous boards and panels, doing follow-up work, or traveling.

He's the kind of guy who plays when he is working and is working when he plays. "What do you mean 'what do I do for fun?'" says Byrd in mock horror as his bone dry sense of humor lets loose. "I go bird watching!" His vacations, which now take him all over the world, are more time spent doing what he does on the job: watching birds. "It's his



*Left: Ornithologist Dr. Mitchell A. Byrd posing with a peregrine falcon (*Falco peregrinus*). Above: Peregrine falcons, once extirpated from Virginia, are now being reintroduced throughout the state. Dr. Byrd and Keith Watson prepare to introduce a peregrine falcon to its new home in the heart of the Shenandoah National Park.*

vocation and his hobby," says Mike Lipford, Executive Director for the Virginia Chapter of the Nature Conservancy. "It's not just a job for him. He really lives for this stuff. He's a walking institutional encyclopedia."

Byrd's name is synonymous with William & Mary, but all three of his degrees come from "Hokie" Land: Virginia Tech. After earning his doctorate in 1954, Byrd was drafted, and

his first job was with the Army at Fort Detrick in Maryland. With its typical efficiency, the Army had him working with bubonic plague at its Germ Warfare Center. That phase quickly ended, and two years later he landed a job as an assistant professor of biology at William and Mary. By 1962, he began a 14-year reign as the biology department chairman. Governors Robb, Baliles, Wilder, and Allen appointed him to

environmental posts and to the board of the Virginia Museum of Natural History. He's an advisor to the Environmental Defense Fund, a trustee to the James River Association and on the board of the Nature Conservancy. He's served as an editor for several ornithological publications, and he regularly reviews articles for professional journals. The Department of Interior, in Washington, tapped him to serve on the peregrine falcon recovery team and

made him bald eagle recovery team leader. Allegedly he retired in 1993, but it's difficult to see as he keeps a schedule that would bury a normal person.

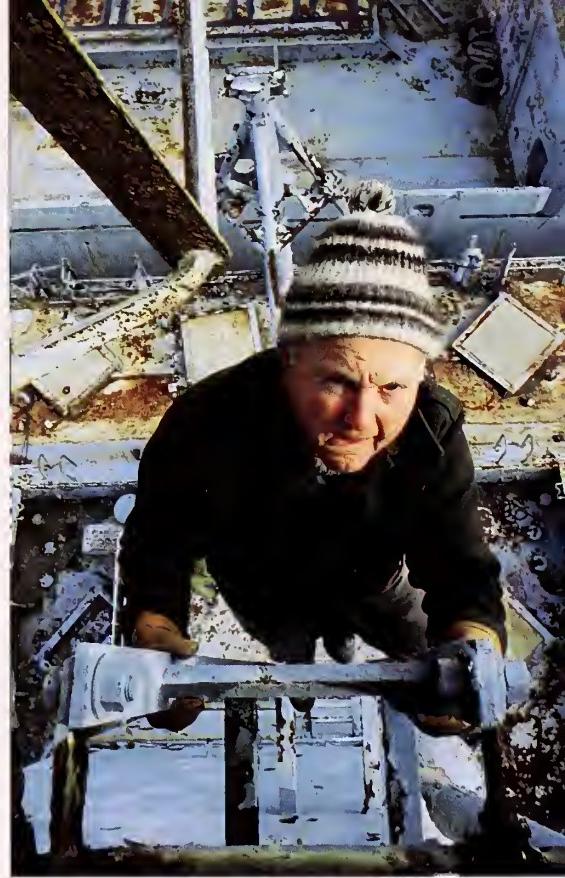
Right: Hack boxes are used to house peregrine falcons, where the birds will spend time acclimating to their new location, before being released back into the wild. Below: Dr. Byrd tracks the progress of a peregrine falcon that was released from a hack box in the mountains of Shenandoah National Park.



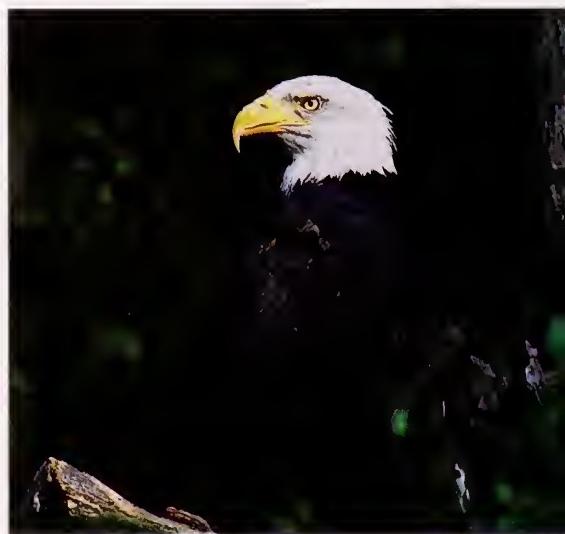
"This guy works weekends and nights. He's awe inspiring," says Bob Duncan, Director of the Wildlife Division at the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries. "He should have been drawing two salaries—one from William & Mary and one from us. We'll never be able to thank him enough. He's made us a better agency." Duncan says Byrd pioneered working with landowners to protect wildlife. "He's the greatest ambassador for wildlife in Virginia I have ever known."

Rex Springston, an environmental reporter for the Richmond Times Dispatch, has interviewed Byrd for many of his stories over the years. "The thing I really appreciate about him, is that he's clearly one of the foremost eagle experts in the U.S.," says Springston, "but when he talks to you, he talks like a human being. He has a passion for what he does. He might sound like an activist, but everything he says is based on science. If he doesn't know something, he'll tell you. And he's just a decent guy. You enjoy the time you spend around him. He just gets more and more interesting as he talks."

"His personality is so gracious and disarming, and yet compelling," says Mike Lipford. Byrd was already a fixture in Virginia when Lipford began his career working with the Natural Heritage program. "He's a wise and gentle man who has taken several of us in



Dr. Mitchell Byrd's work with birds of prey has taken him from the Blue Ridge Mountains to the banks of the Eastern Shore, (above) and even to the tip-top of tall sailing ships (top right) in search of nesting birds. Dr. Byrd's research with the majestic American bald eagle has made him one of the leading eagle experts in the United States.



the conservation field to new heights. If you spend time with him in the field, he almost becomes a father. A lot of us are carrying a little bit of Dr. Byrd around with us everyday."

"The man has just been all over the place doing everything," says Duncan. "Invariably when you talk about wildlife, his name comes up. Mitchell is certainly one of the tallest in the history of Virginia biology. You can't even begin to measure his contribution."





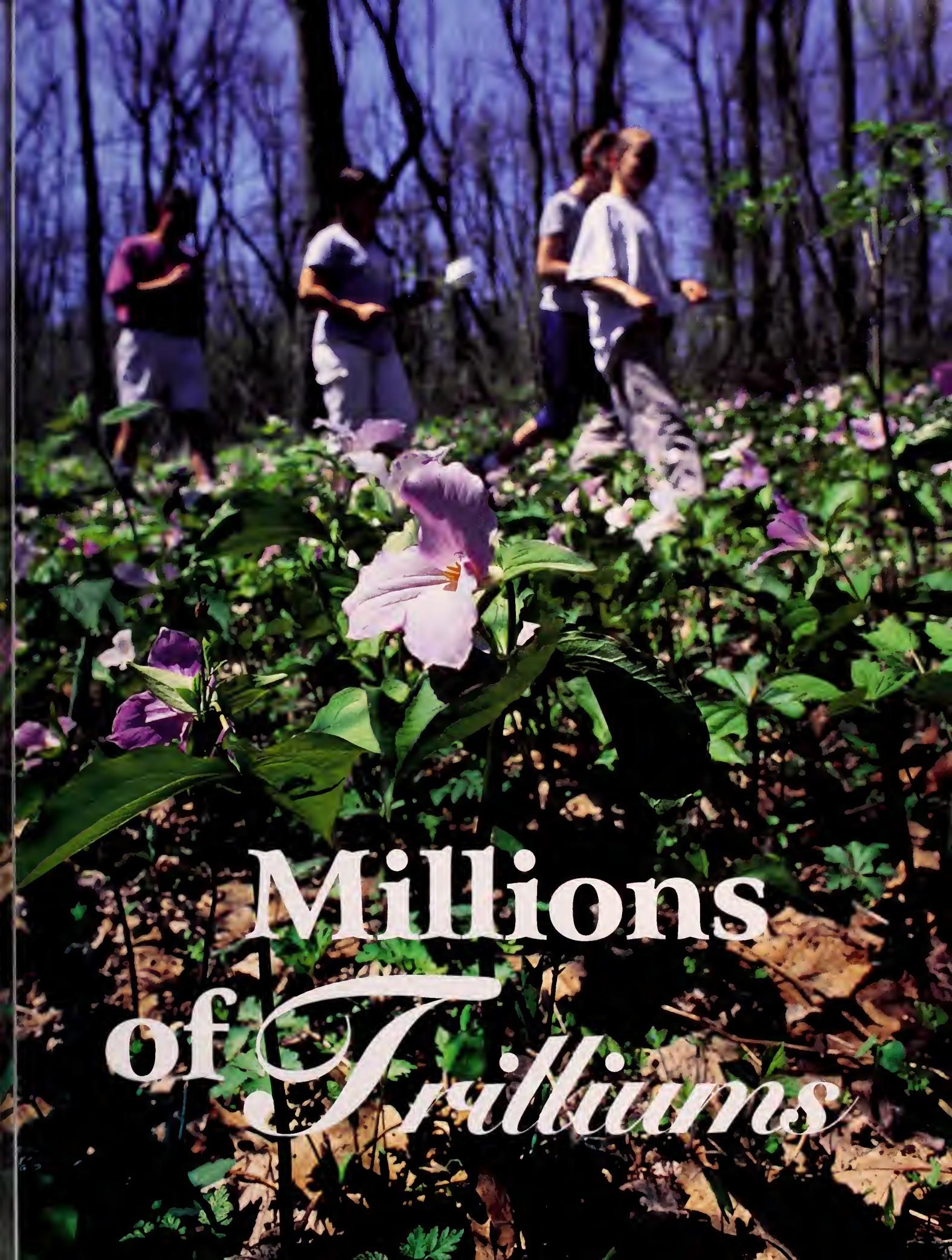
Above: Dr. Mitchell A. Byrd poses with a gyrfalcon/peregrine falcon crossbreed. *Top right:* Dr. Byrd's lifelong devotion to conservation and educating people about the importance of caring for wildlife will be felt for many years to come. *Right:* Dr. Byrd enjoys a rare moment of relaxation at home with his wife of 47 years, Lois, who he credits as being his biggest supporter and best friend.

With an impish smile, Byrd says he's "72 going on 38" and adds that "age is not chronological. It's entirely mental." Accordingly, he shows no sign of slowing down the pace that has been a hallmark of his life. So expect to see the good doctor add to his list of contributions.

Recently, Byrd was asked to name his single greatest accomplishment. His answer was instant. It was the day he married Lois, his wife of 47 years. It's a response that shouldn't surprise those who know him well.

Tim Wright is an award-winning photo-journalist from Virginia. He has traveled the world and his photographs have appeared in numerous publications like Smithsonian, Time, and National Wildlife.





Millions
of Trilliums

*Want to see some beautiful wildflowers?
Then there's no better time or
“blooming” place to be than the
G. Richard Thompson
Wildlife Management Area
in the month of May.*

by Russell C. Poole

Surrounded by a sea of delicate color, your eyes slowly absorb the scene before you as you begin to walk down the trail from parking lot #6 in the state-owned forest. Exotic looking, three petalled flowers appear everywhere. The flowers vary in height from a few inches tall to nearly a foot and a half on stems that scarcely seem able to hold the weight of the flower. The combinations of color astounds you, from brilliant white to light pink to red stripes on broad white petals that appear to be the inspiration for barber poles and candy canes. All of this can be seen within a single grouping of flowers.

Welcome to the G. Richard Thompson Wildlife Management Area (Thompson WMA) near Linden, Virginia. Hidden among the mountains of north central Virginia, you have come to the last stronghold of the large flowered trillium, once found in great stands throughout the state. This beautiful area is a delight for the outdoor enthusiast, whether they be plant lovers, hikers, birdwatchers, hunters, or those just wanting to get away to enjoy one of the most spectacular spring displays that nature has to offer. The Thompson WMA is home to approximately 14 million trillium plants as well as many other truly unique or endangered plants.

According to trillium expert Dr. Richard Lighty, of the Mt. Cuba Center for the Study of Piedmont Flora, the large leafed trillium growing here are among the most dense and varied display he has ever seen.

The Thompson WMA is a result of Virginia's interest, during the 1970s, in expanding the amount of land set aside for preservation and recreational use by the public. The purchase of this area by the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries (VDGIF) took place during



Large flowered trillium (*Trillium grandiflorum*) Dwight Dike

the early 70's under the direction of Dick Cross, Division Chief, and Jim Engle, Property Buyer.

Initially comprised of primary purchases from four landowners in the area (Smalley, Smith, Davenport, and Lake), the area was enlarged to the current holding of 4084 acres with the gift of the Blumenthal property in 1975. Established as a game management area used by the public for hunting and fishing, it was also recognized that it would be a popular area for hiking, with the

Appalachian Trail crossing the tract. While VDGIF was aware of the variety of plants located on the tract, it was 1990 before their importance was realized. At that time the Virginia Native Plant Society (VNPS) began a cooperative management effort to preserve the plant life located at this important site. In 1996 the VNPS named the large flowered trillium the Virginia Wildflower-of-the-Year, noting that the Thompson WMA is thought to hold the largest population in the United States.

For the deliberate hiker, there are new discoveries to be made with every step along the trail. As you gaze upon the trillium flowers you notice hidden below them smaller species of plants. Among these are: the purple flowers of the common violet; the soft, pine-tree-like appearance of the common bladderwort with its small, delicate flowers and their unusual air sac; the pale, bluish, purple flowers of the wild geranium; the abundance of white flowered star chickweed; and the



Yellow lady's slipper (*Cypripedium calceolus*) © Russell Poole



flower of the yellow violet. If you are truly observant, you might even notice the moccasin-shaped flower of the yellow lady's slipper hidden among the carpet of trillium. An added surprise could be the sighting of a white-tailed deer, ruffed grouse, or even a wild turkey. A large number of birds, insects, and larger animals claim the Thompson WMA as their home.

Things to Do

Reaching the Thompson WMA requires a pleasant drive through the rolling hills and farmland of Northern Virginia. In addition to the wonderful palette of colors created by the many wildflowers in the Thompson area, there are also numerous species of birds for the dedicated birdwatcher to see and identify. There are many nearby points of interest for the outdoorsperson, the history buff, or anyone just wanting to relax and unwind amid the beauty of nature. Included among these are: the State Arboretum of Virginia, a 170-acre retreat surrounded by the 700-acre Blandy Experimental Farm; the 1800s town of Boyce, Va. with the exceptional turn of the century Boyce Station, a luxurious passenger rail station currently being restored to its former grandeur; the 1782 Burwood-Morgan grist mill in nearby Millwood, Va., and historic Mount Bleak, an early 1800s home located at the heart of Sky Meadows State Park in nearby Paris, Va. Visitors to Sky Meadows, during June, can plan their trip to attend the annual Strawberry Festival with its events, demonstrations, and food to delight kids of all ages. □

Russell C. Poole is a freelance outdoor writer and photographer.

Squaw root (*Conopholis americana*); ©Bill Lea

For Additional Information

A Guide To Virginia's Wildlife Management Areas contains information, maps, and directions to all of the state WMA's is available for \$5.00.

Checks are made payable to "Treasurer of Virginia" and can be ordered by writing: The Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries, Attention WMA Guide, P.O. Box 11104, Richmond, VA 23230-1104. This informative publication is also available on the Department's Web site at: www.dgifstate.va.us.

Another excellent reference book is *Enjoying Virginia's Outdoors: A Guide to Wildlife Management Areas*,

by Bob Gooch, available at bookstores throughout Virginia or by calling the University Press of Virginia at (804) 924-6064.

Sky Meadows State Park - (540) 592-3556.

The State Arboretum - (540) 837-1758.

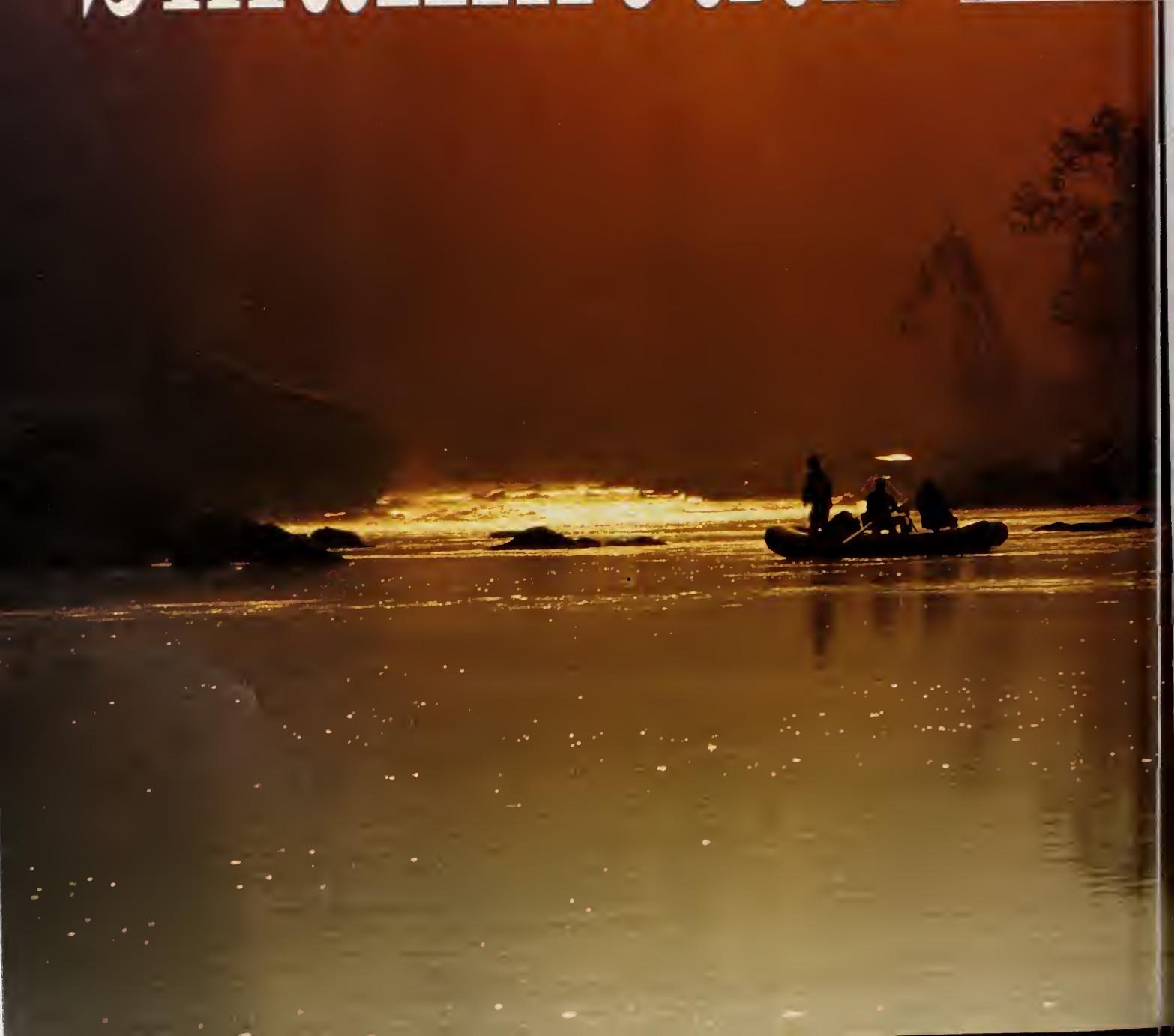
Millwood Mill and the Boyce Railroad Station - Frederick County, Historical Society (540) 662-6550. □



Top: A blacksmith demonstrates his metal working skills at the Sky Meadows State Park, during the park's annual Strawberry Festival. Above: The administration building and library at the State Arboretum of Virginia. Right: The historic Burwood-Morgan gristmill in Millwood, Virginia. Photos ©Russell Poole.



Smallmouth





on the Fly

With an abundance of streams and rivers in Virginia, fly-fishing for big smallmouth bass is catching lots of new anglers.

by Harry Murray

If you would like to catch more large smallmouth bass you might listen to the advice of this young boy.

The older angler had fished hard all day and caught nothing but small fish. As he carefully stored his fine tackle in his big SUV, a young boy came up from the river, headed for his bicycle, with a stringer of very large bass over one shoulder and an old hand-me-down fly rod over the other. With great admiration the older gentleman inquired as to just how the boy had caught so many large bass while he had caught none. The boy politely replied, "I just try to think like a fish, then I fish according to what I think they would like."

Actually, this is very sound advice for us as we attempt to catch larger smallmouth, so let's look at their needs and habits.

Large bass need a great amount of food, and in most cases, they apparently do not want to range over large areas to find it. Thus, we are looking for concentrated food sources.

Second, they want secure homes. Admittedly a large smallmouth bass has few predators, but his instincts

were honed from the time he was a fingerling to be on the look out overhead. Birds and snakes could come from above and take him when he least expects it. Consequently, today he still prefers overhead cover or solid cover to the side located closest to him.

Finally, he does not like bright sunlight and will select a home, feeding stations, and feeding conditions where he can take advantage of any low light level.

As the stream level drops and aquatic vegetation changes throughout the season the available food and cover for the bass may change, which will greatly influence their homes and feeding habits. In order for you to get good fishing throughout the season, let's examine

The New, James, Rappahannock, and Shenandoah are just a few of the well-known, blue-ribbon smallmouth rivers located in Virginia. Anglers will find many of these rivers easily accessible by small boat. During the warmer months wading becomes a refreshing method of fishing.

these conditions from spring until fall and adapt our tactics to them.

Every spring I have many anglers come into my fly shop to tell me of the big smallmouth bass they just caught. Their excitement, and frequently the photographs they send





In early spring the Murray's Hellgrammite is an excellent choice for locating large smallmouth bass.

me in the mail, overrides any question of the validity of these stories.

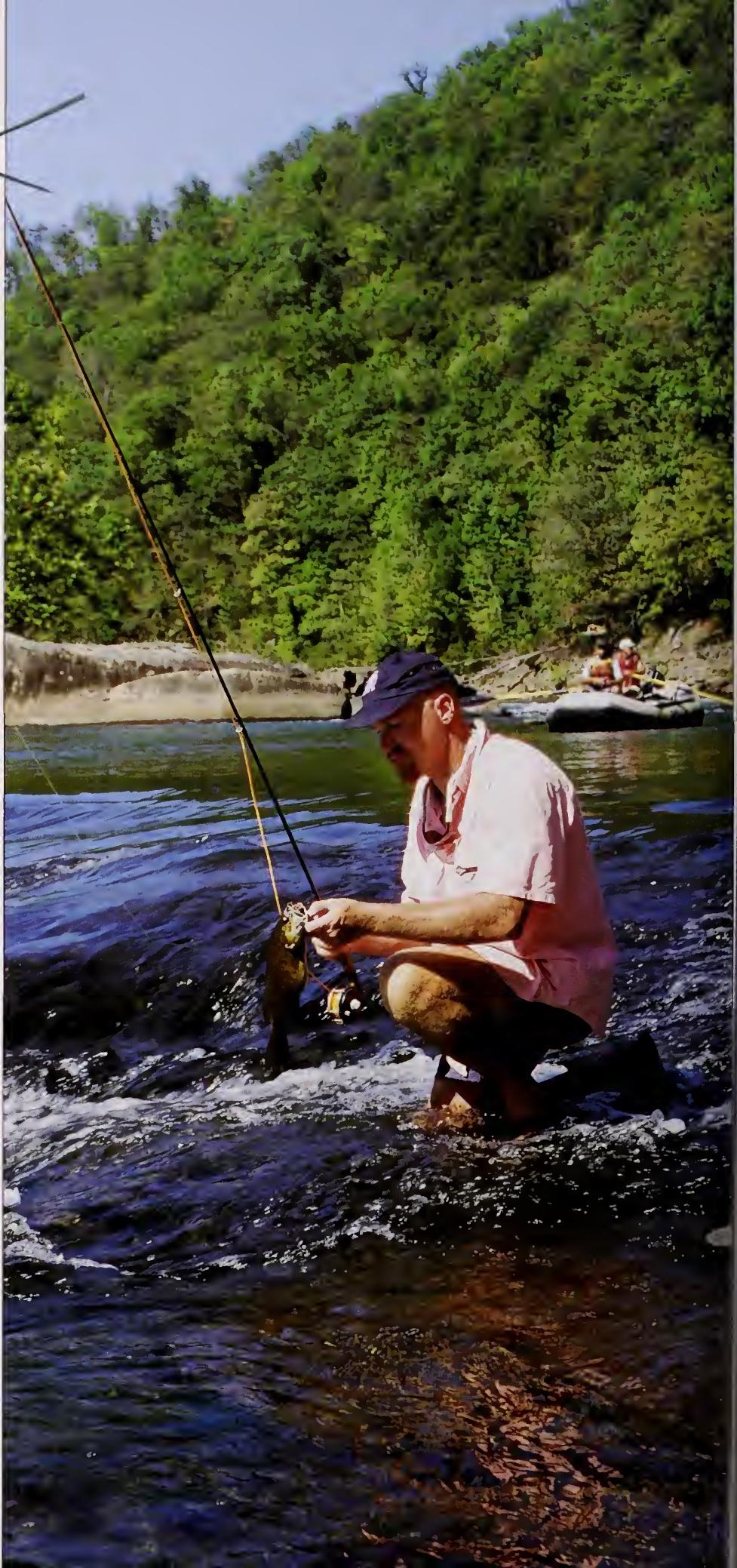
The most logical explanation as to why we have such a good chance to catch large bass in the spring is the high water level. The fish simply are not as wary as they will be later in the season when the streams drop.

One of my most productive tactics for taking large smallmouth early in the season is to fish a size 4 Murray's Hellgrammite upstream, using a dead drift method in the lower reaches of the riffles where they meet the main pools. This is an easy technique to master, and each year many of the anglers in my fly fishing schools catch many nice bass in this way.

Other areas that produce large smallmouth in the spring are the deep pools right below the riffles. Fishing a pattern, such as Shenk's Black Sculpin, down and across stream to swim it slowly across the stream bottom will often produce several large bass from each pool.

Each year in late May, I catch some large smallmouth in the shallows along the banks by wading down the river about 50 feet out from the shore and casting a size 2 James Wood Bucktail in tight against the banks and stripping it out into the deeper water. Big bass often roam these shallows to feed on small sunfish and will hit this fly with gusto.

continued on page 21



Public Lakes of Southeastern Virginia



Enjoy the great outdoors among the many public lakes of southeastern Virginia.

Tidewater Virginia offers a wide variety of lakes and reservoirs for the avid angler.

When most anglers think of Tidewater they immediately envision saltwater fishing; whopper stripers, blues, and mackerel. Seldom are largemouth bass, bream, and landlocked striped bass ever considered, and yet this area of the state has excellent freshwater lakes and reservoirs. In the midst of the urbanized coastal areas, as well as just a short hop to the west in the heart of the coastal plain, are reservoirs that are an angler's paradise. These lakes and reservoirs offer trophy size freshwater fish, often in great numbers. Lakes Prince and Western Branch produced four current state record fish and most of the reservoirs in the Suffolk area are known statewide for whopper bream and abundant largemouth and consistently produce many citations annually.

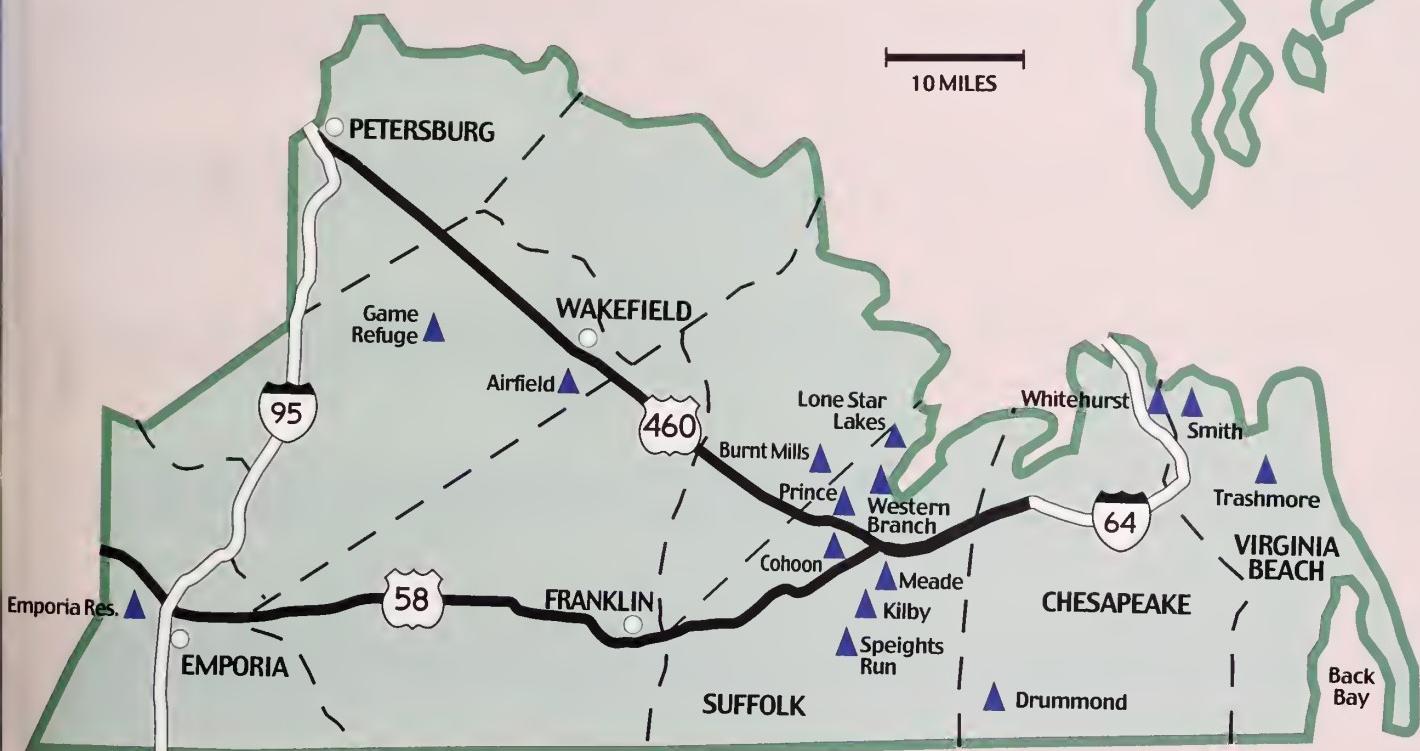
When the crowds hit the beaches and huge flotillas surround the Bay Bridge islands, perhaps it would be refreshing and rewarding to visit these freshwater lakes. Join the local fishermen who know a good thing—experience the solitude and the challenge of southeastern freshwater angling.

Top right: Savvy anglers testing their tackle with line-busting gar on Western Branch Reservoir. Right: The Lone Star Lakes and Lake Burnt Mills (far right), both of which are located in Suffolk, are perfect out-of-the-way angling destinations. All photos ©Dwight Dyke.





For years Lake Prince, in Suffolk, has been known for producing slab size bream throughout the spring and summer months.



Public Lakes of Southeastern Virginia



Southeastern Virginia

Lake, Size & Location	Permit Req.	Boat Ramp	Picnic Facil.	Gas Motor	Boat Rental	Handi Facil.	Conces. Facil.	LMB BG	CF	CRP	SB	MY	CP	WE	YP	WP
Airfield (105 ac) Located 5 miles south of Wakefield on Rt. 628.		DR						●		●			●		●	
Back Bay (25,473 ac) Rt. 615. State ramps at Mill Landing Rd. and Back Bay Landing Rd.		●		●	● Priv		● Priv	●	●	●			●	●	●	●
Burnt Mills (610 ac) Located in Suffolk off Rt. 10 on Rt. 603. No fishing from shore.	Fee	DR		12 HP				●		●			●	●	●	●
Cohoon (510 ac) off Rt. 58 on Pitchkettle Road (Rt. 604) in Suffolk.	Fee	●		10 HP	●		●	●		●			●	●	●	●
Drummond (3,000 ac) Access by feeder ditch off Rt. 17.				EM						●			●	●	●	●
Emporia (210 ac) West of I-95 on Rt. 611.		●		10 HP				●	●	●						
Game Refuge Lake (30 ac) I-95 to Rt. 35, left on Rt. 602, go 3 miles, turn right at brick house, go 1 mile and turn right to lake.		DR						●	●	●			●			
Kilby (226 ac) Located on Business Rt. 58 in Suffolk. No shore fishing.	Fee	CL		10 HP				●		●			●			
Lone Star (490 ac) Fishing station located off Rt. 10 on Rt. 125 in Suffolk.	Fee	●	●					●		●	●					●
Meade (512 ac) Fishing station (bait sales). Located off Rt. 58 on Pitchkettle Rd. (Rt. 604) in Suffolk.	Fee	●		10 HP	●		●	●	●	●	●		●	●	●	●
Prince (777 ac) Off Rt. 460 on Lake Prince Rd. (Rt. 604) in Suffolk.	Fee	●	●	12 HP	●		●	●	●	●	●		●	●	●	●
Smith (222 ac) Fishing station located on Rt. 13 (Northampton Blvd.) in Va. Beach.	Fee	●	●	12 HP	●		●	●	●	●	●		●	●	●	●
Speights Run (197 ac) Located on Rt. 646 off Rt. 58 in Suffolk. No shore fishing.	Fee	●		10 HP				●	●	●			●			
Trashmore (52 ac) Located off Va. Beach Exp. in Va. Beach. No private boats.			●		●		●	●	●	●	●		●		●	●
Western Branch (1,579 ac) 2 boat ramps located off Rt. 603, and Rt. 605 in Suffolk. Concession located on Rt. 605.	Fee	●		12 HP	●		●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Whitehurst (458 ac) Located off Shore Drive (Rt. 60) in Va. Beach. Shore fishing.	Fee	●		12 HP	●		●	●	●	●		●	●	●	●	●

Key

Fee - Permit available at location

DR - Dirt ramp

EM - Electric motors only

CL - Ramp closed. Another to be built in another location



LMB /BG - Largemouth Bass/Bluegill
CF - Catfish

CRP - Crappie

SB - Striped Bass

MY - Muskellunge

CP - Chain Pickerel
WE - Walleye
YP - Yellow Perch
WP - White Perch

For more information contact:

VDGIF

500 Hinton Ave.

Chesapeake, VA 23323

757/558-4730

[www.dgf.state.va.us](http://www.dgif.state.va.us)

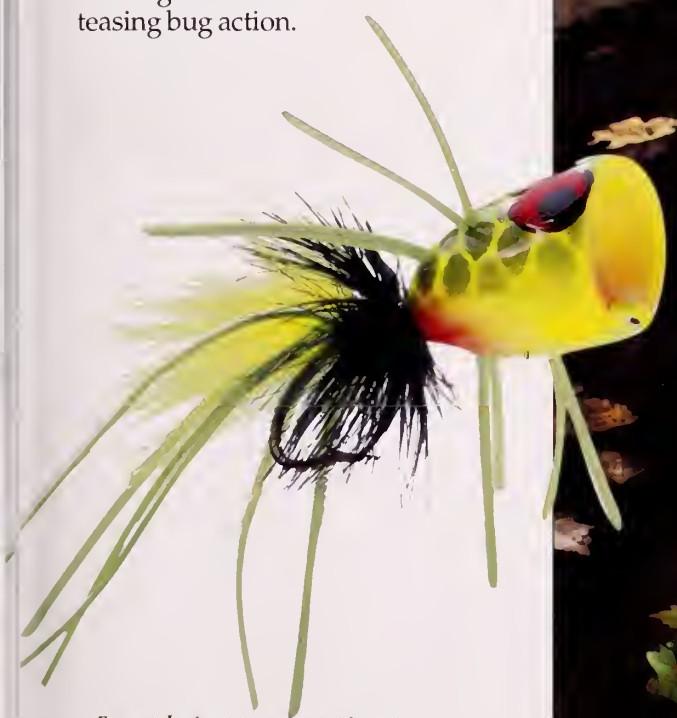
Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries

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Since many anglers do most of their fishing during the summer, let's look at some of our best possibilities for catching large bass at that time.

My favorite place and time to catch large bass during the summer is to fish the aquatic grass beds at daylight. Two of the most important physical features that influence the smallmouth feeding habits are now working in our favor. The water temperature is a few degrees lower now than it will be later in the day, and, more important, the low light level at this time is definitely more conducive to the serious feeding of large bass than it will be in the bright sun later.

If the water around the grass beds is only several feet deep, I fish the edges and open bays within them with a size 6 Sunfish Shenandoah Slider on the surface. By wading downstream about 40 feet out from these beds I can effectively cover the whole grass bed with a teasing bug action.



For explosive topwater action, try a popping bug, like the Shenandoah Slider.





Big bait imitations, like the Shenk's Black Sculpin (above) and a Murray's Madtom, work best when fished deep and retrieved slowly.

If the water along the edge of the grass bed is 3 feet deep or more, I fish it with a size 4 Silver Outcast Streamer, which mimics the shiner minnow that the large bass feed on.

Here is a tactic that gave me outstanding action with large bass last summer when our rivers became very low. It is the most exciting way I know to catch large smallmouth!

About two hours before dark I'd head to the tails of some of our largest river pools, where perpendicular ledges reach to within inches of the surface to momentarily slow the currents. The water in front of these river-crossing ledges is 3-4 feet deep, thus providing ideal feeding stations for large bass once the sun gets off the water.

I position myself 40-60 feet upstream of these ledges and cast a big dry fly, such as a size 8 Mr. Rapidan Skater, down and across stream at a 45 degree angle so it lands over these deep cuts. Instantly I raise my rod tip at a 45-degree angle out over the stream while simultaneously stripping in the slack with my line hand. This enables me to lift the big dry fly up on its toes and, by swinging my fly rod upstream in foot long sweeps, I can skate the big dry fly along the surface of the river to mimic the action of the natural damselflies buzzing across the stream.

Using this skating technique to fish back and forth across the pool tails is effective from July until mid-September.

In October the large small-mouth move into the deep pools and deep cuts between the river-crossing ledges, and the fishing can be outstanding.

I like to wade in below the downstream ledge and cast a size 4 Black Strymph or size 4 Murray's Madtom upstream into the deepest water and slowly strip it back right along the stream bottom.

Once you get to know a river you'll find the same deep cuts hold the largest bass each fall. If

you are fishing a river for the first time, you want to find cuts and pools that are 6-8 feet deep, then fish them very carefully.

Virginia has an abundance of smallmouth rivers that hold large fish. By using these suggestions simply as a starting point you may be amazed at the number of large bass you'll catch. □

Harry Murray is the owner of Murray's Fly Shop in Edinburg, Va. He has written numerous books and articles on fly-fishing and hosts a very informative Web site at www.muraysflyshop.com.



Calling All Frogs!

by Carol Heiser and Sally Mills
illustrations by Spike Knuth

With the capacity to jump more than ten times their body length, frogs surely qualify as one of nature's supreme escape artists. Like all escape artists, these amphibians employ a variety of cunning maneuvers to avoid capture by predators in the water and on the land. Some frogs, like treefrogs, can even change color to match their surroundings.

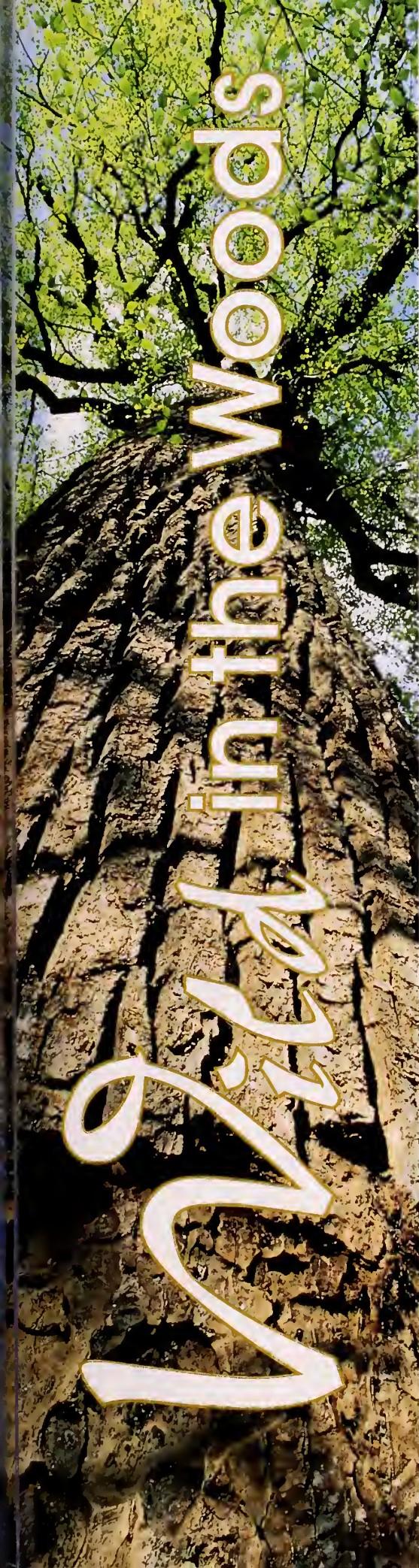
Life as a frog is a complex journey, balanced precariously on the quality of our water and the availability of suitable habitat.

Wet Predators

True frogs superbly exemplify the amphibian life. The word *amphibian* comes from the Greek root *amphibia*, a reference to these animals' life on both land and in the water. It is one that begins as a tadpole, which breathes underwater with gills, and that ends with a creature equally comfortable in aquatic or terrestrial environments. That's not to say frogs can stray from water too long. Although frogs do have lungs, they must continue to breathe oxygen-rich water through their



A pickerel frog
(*Rana palustris*)
sitting on a marsh
marigold.





Frogs develop through a process called metamorphosis. Their physical form, or structure, changes during development. Frogs often lay their eggs in a mass or attach them to objects in the water. Hatched frogs quickly transform into tadpoles and then mature frogs.

skin to survive. When you see a frog sitting in a puddle, it's actually taking in water through a specialized seat patch. Their moist, sensitive skin, therefore, makes frogs vulnerable to changes in water temperature and water quality. To cope with the first, they are cold-blooded and can adjust their body temperature accordingly. To cope with the latter, unfortunately, they have no natural defenses against lost habitat or water pollution!

As adults, frogs and toads are carnivores and spend much of their active hours eating insects. A long, muscular tongue helps them snatch prey with uncanny accuracy and speed. Water-loving insects like dragonflies as well as common houseflies are typical frog fare. But frogs also eat worms, crayfish, and even other amphibians. Bullfrogs will eat small birds, snakes, and mice.

Life as a Frog

Scientists group frogs and toads according to the habitat these animals have adapted to for reproduction. Bullfrogs and green frogs, for example, need permanent waterbodies like ponds and lakes—that may or may not house predatory fish—to reproduce. Thousands of eggs are laid directly in the water and fertilized by a waiting male. Unlike bird eggs, frog eggs lack a protective outer covering. Instead, success is determined by sheer number, and their eggs are a jelly-like mass that may float as a sheet or attach to stems or floating objects. Temperature plays an important role in the rate of their development, and frogs, therefore, seek out warmer pools to reproduce.

Metamorphosis (a change in the physical form or structure of an animal during its development from young to adult) into young tad-

Place and Time Matter

Most frog species, including many toads, use a very specific type of aquatic habitat to reproduce: ephemeral pools that lack predatory fish. Ephemeral pools are small, shallow bodies of water, such as standing water in a bottomland forest, puddles, boggy areas, tire tracks, and other depressions. These are temporary pools and puddles formed in spring and that can dry up quickly, so the larval period is very short-lived (sometimes just 48 hours!). If conditions are harsh during this short time-span, entire year-classes of offspring can disappear.

Green frog (Rana clamitans)



Frogs that breed in ephemeral sources of water tend to be smaller, and therefore, more susceptible to environmental extremes than their counterparts in large ponds. As a result, populations of frogs that breed in ephemeral pools fluctuate more widely than populations of those species that live in more permanent sources of water.

Frog or Toad?

Toads can survive a broader range of habitats by retaining water in their bumpy skin (their skin does not give you warts). For this reason, you are more likely to discover a toad burrowed in the soil or hiding under a moist, downed tree. In general, toads are not as streamlined in appearance and have shorter hind legs, a good key to identification. Finally, many toads (and a few frog species) secrete a poisonous substance through the *parotid gland* found on either side of their neck. Would-be predators soon learn and remember how uncomfortable it is to eat one!

Frog Futures

Virginia has a healthy population of frogs statewide—as many as 25 different species. Among the most widespread are the northern spring peeper, southern green frog, and Fowler's toad (pictured here). Others, such as the squirrel treefrog and southern leopard frog thrive only in wetter regions east of the fall line.

Several species that were once welcome mascots to canoeers on eastern Virginia creeks have been conspicuously absent of late. Indeed, biologists worldwide have documented evidence of amphibian decline, believed to be the result of many complex factors. Ozone depletion, increased UV radiation, the use of organophosphates which mimic estrogen when they break down, and other chemicals in rain and runoff all seem to play a role.

There is also a fungus affecting some species, called *chytridiomycosis*, which was uncovered three years ago and has been documented from Maine to Maryland. This disease thickens and dries out a frog's skin, causing suffocation. Other concerns over disappearing frog populations have to do with habitat loss from urban sprawl and the impact of introduced species that can out-compete native species in the food web. Currently, two frog species are of state concern and one, the barking treefrog, is considered threatened in Virginia.

luck if a gambler passed a frog on his way to a card game. The frog was elevated to fresh notoriety when Mark Twain wrote his classic story, "The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County." In it, Twain extols the supernatural feats performed by a frog named Dan'l Webster: "And when it come to fair and square jumping on a dead level, he could get over more ground at one straddle than any animal of his breed you ever see." [An average bullfrog can jump six feet.]

Toad eggs and tadpole.



Did You Know?

Frogs hear through a sensitive membrane, called the *tympanic membrane*, on either side of their head. Unlike the human ear, it looks like a skin "patch" and is extremely sensitive to vibration. In bullfrogs, the male's tympanic membrane is larger than the eye, while in the female it is slightly smaller. The tympanic membrane is critical to the frog's ability to detect movement—to avoid predation as well as to capture smaller prey—and much more important than its sense of smell.

Frog Folklore

Frogs are colorful characters in many literary and historical accounts of cultures worldwide. In this country, it was once thought good

Calling All Frogs

On any given night, starting in February and running until about the end of July, frog lovers are out and about listening for frogs and counting them as part of Virginia's Amphibian Monitoring Survey Program. These volunteers are particularly successful if the weather is foggy or wet, because weather, as well as season, can play an important role in how, when, and how long various frog species call.

Only male frogs call, and they do so to attract a mate. Females don't use their voice, except perhaps to make a brief "release" call after mating. There are breeding calls and rain calls, and different species call at different times of the year. They even call at different times of the day and night. For example, Fowler's toads are active right after dark in the summer and call for only a couple of hours. Bullfrogs, on the other hand, start calling midnight or later.

Because calling behavior is fairly well known, biologists and volunteers can monitor frog populations by surveying their calls. When this data is combined with observations of environmental conditions, like temperature, rainfall, moon phase, and other factors, we can look for relationships and trends that might shed light on the status of these amphibians.

Southern leopard frog
(*Rana sphenocephala*)

Volunteers in a frog calling survey are assigned one of 50 routes, traversed either on foot or by car at regular time intervals. They stop and listen along the route and count the numbers of individuals of each species they hear. They also record the intensity of the calling, whether it be just a few frogs or a whole chorus. Another method is to use a "Frog Logger," a recording system set up in advance with timers and a microphone. Regardless of method, these survey locations only become significant after many years of listening and comparing data with other sites.

To the inexperienced, identifying frog calls might seem like an impossible task, but like most rewarding efforts it simply takes practice. Carpenter frogs, for example, have short calls that sound like little hammer chops. American toads have a high-pitched trill on one note. The green frog call sounds like a banjo string being plucked, and the northern cricket frog call sounds like two rocks being tapped together.

Surveying frog calls is also made easier because frogs are either spring breeders or summer breeders, and a particular frog species may or may not occur in one area or another. Wood frogs are the earliest breeders and can be heard in February or March; they come out for one or two nights, and then they're gone. The leopard frog and spring peeper breed next, with peepers considered an extended breeder, from March to April. Later on in the spring come pickerel, cricket, and gray tree frogs. Not until summer will you hear bullfrogs and Fowler's toads.

Female bullfrog (*Rana catesbeiana*)

Male bullfrog (*Rana catesbeiana*)

Woodhouse's toad, Fowler's race
(*Bufo woodhousii*)

If you would like to learn more about Virginia's Frog Calling Survey or would like to participate, contact Don Schwab, wildlife diversity biologist at the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries in Williamsburg, (757) 253-4180, or e-mail dschwab@dgif.state.va.us

- Also see sites listed in *Wild in the Woods* for March 2001, *Virginia Wildlife* □

Sally Mills is an outdoor writer and editor for Virginia Sea Grant at the Virginia Institute of Marine Science.

Carol Heiser is a Wildlife Education Specialist and coordinates the WILD School Sites program at the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries.

For Further Learning...

Tapes/CD's

- *Voices of the Night*, Cornell Laboratory, Ithaca NY
- *Calls of Frogs and Toads*, NorthWord Press, Minocqua, WI

Books

- *The Frog Book*, by Mary C. Dickerson, A Dover Reprint
- *Handbook of Frogs and Toads*, by A. A. Wright & A. H. Wright, Comstock/Cornell Univ. Press
- *Peterson Guide: Reptiles and Amphibians* (3rd ed.), by R. Conant & J. T. Collins
- *Atlas of Amphibians and Reptiles in Virginia*, by Joseph Mitchell and Karen Reay, Va. Dept. of Game & Inland Fisheries (available for \$7.50; call (804) 367-6913).

Web Sites

- *FrogLog*, a publication of the Declining Amphibian Population Task Force at www2.open.ac.uk/biology/froglog/
- *FrogWatch USA* www.mp2-pwrc.usgs.gov/frogwatch/frogwatch.htm
- *North American Reporting Center for Amphibian Malformations* www.npwrc.usgs.gov/narca_m/
- *A Thousand Friends of Frogs*, resources for teachers and students from the Center for Global Environmental Education <http://cgee.hamline.edu/frogs/>
- *Frogs Forever*, National Wildlife Federation www.nwf.org/nwf/frogs/index.html
- *Virginia Herpetological Society* <http://vhsociety.home.mindspring.com/>
- Look for more sites on the Amphibian Monitoring page of the Patuxent Wildlife Research Center www.pwrc.usgs.gov/

**Virginia
Naturally**

Green Frog (Rana clamitans)





VDGIF 2001 Calendar of Events

May 5: *Virginia Outdoor Day*, Belle Isle State Park, Lancaster County, from 10:00 a.m.–4:00 p.m. For information call Hilary Welch (804) 367-6351 or the park at (804) 462-5030.

June 8-10: *Becoming An Outdoors-Woman*, Holiday Lake 4-H Camp, Appomattox, Va. For information call (804) 367-6351.

June 14th Deadline: *2001 Kids 'n Fishing Photo Contest*. For information call (804) 367-6778.

June 14th Deadline: *James River Fishing Challenge*. For information call (804) 367-8916.

June 23-24: *Wild for Wildlife Days*, 4-H Center, Front Royal, Va. For information call (804) 367-8999.

September 14-16: *Virginia Outdoors Family Weekend*, Hungry Mother State Park, Smyth, Va. For information call (804) 367-6351.

September 29: *Women in the Outdoors*, Izaak Walton League Park, Centreville, Va. For information call Linda Layser (703) 425-6665 or e-mail rglayser@msn.com.

October 5-7: *Virginia Outdoors Woman, Mother-Daughter Event*, Appomattox, Va. For information call (804) 367-6351.

Additional information on VDGIF events can be found on the Department Web site at [www.dgf.state.va.us](http://www.dgif.state.va.us). □

2001 Kids 'n Fishing Photo Contest "Picture the Excitement"



It certainly isn't hard to "picture it," kids 'n fishing that is—smiles, laughs, looks of anticipation, and excitement. So join in the fun, catch the excitement of your child on film while fishing, and enter his or her picture in the annual Kids 'n Fishing Photo Contest sponsored by the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries (VDGIF) and the Shakespeare Tackle Company.

The winning pictures are those that best capture the theme "kids enjoying fishing." First place photographs of each category will receive a variety of fishing-related prizes. There is no need to be a professional photographer. Any snapshot will do.

Contest Rules:

- Children in the photographs must fall into one of the following age categories when the picture is taken: 1-5, 6-9, and 10-12.
- Photos should not be more than one year old.

• We will accept only one photo per child.

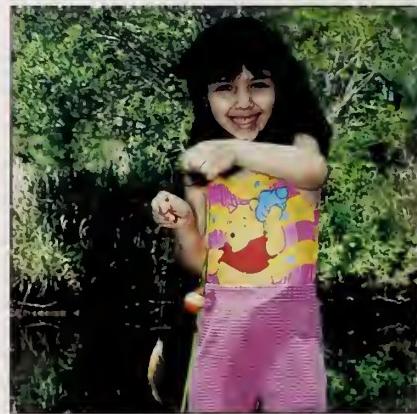
• Photos must be received before June 14, 2001.

• The name, age, address, and phone number of the child must accompany the photo. Prizes will be sent directly to the winning children.

• Judging will take place during the last week in June.

• All pictures become the property of the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries and will not be returned. Unless otherwise notified, each contest entry that is sent in means you are giving consent to use the photos on the VDGIF web page and in publications, exhibits, and other visual productions of the agency.

To enter the 2001 Kids 'n Fishing Photo Contest send your photographs with the child's name, age, phone number, and address to: The Aquatic Education Program, Photo Contest, Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries, c/o Anne Skalski, P.O. Box 11104, 4010 West Broad Street, Richmond, VA 23230-1104. □



2000 Angler of the Year

Species Size	Angler's Name/Home	Body of Water	Date
Largemouth Bass, 14 lbs. 0 oz., 28 ins.	Darwin Schaeffer, Farmville	Briery Creek Lake	03/11/2000
Smallmouth Bass, 7 lbs. 1 oz., 22 ins.	Jerry Hale, Honaker	South Holston Res.	03/09/2000
Crappie, 3 lbs. 15 oz.	David Richardson, Jr., Skipwith	Buggs Island Lake	04/01/2000
Rock Bass, 2 lbs. 2 oz.	Shannon Howard, Union Hall	Pigg River	05/25/2000
Sunfish, 2 lbs. 10 oz., 13 ½ ins.	Michael Kouri, Suffolk	Private Pond	03/22/2000
White Bass, 3 lbs. 11 oz., 20 ½ ins.	Rassie Wright, Sr., Wytheville	Claytor Lake	07/08/2000
Striped Bass, 48 lbs. 10 oz., 47 ins.	Harvey Altice, Jr., Martinsville	Smith Mtn. Lake	04/26/2000
White Perch, 1 lb. 14 oz., 12 ¼ ins.	Richard Clegg, Creedmoor, NC	Buggs Island Lake	11/04/2000
Channel Catfish, 28 lbs. 13 oz., 38 ½ ins.	Dale O'Kelly, Mechanicsville	Private Pond	02/29/2000
Blue Catfish, 61 lbs. 13 oz., 45 ins.	Meaghan Henshaw, Provid. Forge	James River	08/16/2000
Flathead Catfish, 50 lbs. 1 oz., 43 ins.	Shannon Byers, Big Island	James River	07/02/2000
Rainbow Trout, 11 lbs. 3 oz., 24 ¾ ins.	Russell Mattox, New Castle	John's Creek	08/20/2000
Brook Trout, 4 lbs. 12 oz., 22 ½ ins.	Kevin Weaver, Mt. Jackson	Cripple Creek	07/29/2000
Brown Trout, 8 lbs. 12 oz., 25 ¾ ins.	Danny McCoy, Lebanon	Alvarado River	04/24/2000
Chain Pickerel, 6 lbs. 4 oz., 27 ins.	Christopher Weekley, Powhatan	Lake Shawnee	05/07/2000
Muskellunge, 36 lbs. 10 oz., 51 ins.	Jennings Hackney, Birchleaf	Smith Mnt. Lake	03/26/2000
Northern Pike, 10 lbs. 8 oz., 34 ½ ins.	Allen Williams, Jr., Yorktown	Harwood Mill Res.	04/14/2000
Walleye, 15 lbs. 15 oz. 33 ¾ ins.	Anthony Duncan, Wytheville	New River	12/15/2000
Yellow Perch, 2 lbs. 6 oz., 16 ins.	Charles Wiley, Sr., Covington	Lake Moomaw	02/29/2000
Gar, 23 lbs. 6 oz. 44 ¼ ins.	Rusty Martin, Fredericksburg	Rappahannock River	07/22/2000
Bowfin, 12 lbs. 3 oz.	Robert Hummer, Jr., Mechanicsville	Diascund Reservoir	10/21/2000
Carp, 36 lbs., 40 ins	Ronnie Lindsey, Hillsdale	Claytor Lake	06/02/2000

Please Note: For record keeping purposes, please report any errors on your Trophy Fish Awards immediately. Do not delay. If you discover an error, please contact the Virginia Angler Recognition Program at 804-367-8916 or write to: VARP, P.O. Box 11104, 4010 W. Broad St. Richmond, VA 23230-1104. You can find all you need to know about the Trophy Fish Program at www.dgif.state.va.us.



The Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries' Hall of Fame list is a compilation of all the freshwater anglers who qualified and became a Master Angler or an Expert Angler.

To achieve the status of Master Angler I, five trophy fish of different species must be caught and registered with the Virginia Angler Recognition Program. For Master II, 10 trophy fish of different species must be caught, and so on for the Masters III or IV level. Expert Anglers must catch and register 10 trophy fish of the same species.

Each angler that accomplishes this feat receives a Master Angler or Expert Angler certificate and patch. Expert patches include the species on the patch. There is no fee or application for Master or Expert.

If you have records prior to 1995 and believe you may have obtained this angling status, please call the Virginia Angler Recognition Program at (804) 367-8916 to have your records checked.

The 2000 fishing year is going out with ringing in a new award for Virginia's freshwater anglers. The Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries has enhanced the Angler Recognition Program to include an opportunity for freshwater anglers to earn a Creel-of-the-Year Award.

This award will recognize the angler who accounts for the most trophy-size fish caught and registered in the Angler Recognition Program from January 1 through December 31, annually. The first award will be presented to the angler that has registered the most trophy-sized fish between the dates of January 1, 2001 and December 31, 2001.

2000 Ang

Master Level I

John Jones
 Larry Kerns
 James King, Jr.
 Ronnie Lindsey
 Bobby Maiden
 Stephen Miklandric
 James Minnick
 David Mittelstaeter
 Walter Moseley
 Donald Mountcastle
 David Muise
 Emmett Muse, Jr.
 John Naus
 Clifford Pace, Sr.
 Kevin Patterson
 John Payne
 Mike Perdue
 Mark Perdue
 Frederick Price, Jr.
 Thomas Rainey
 Marvin Rankin
 Kevin Reinhardt
 Neil Renouf
 Steve Rice
 Steven Richards
 Phillip Roark, Sr.
 Jr. Roberts
 James Robinson, Jr.
 Henry Rose, Jr.
 Joseph Rowland
 Terry Schaedler
 William Scheier
 Mike Sielicki
 Michael Smith
 William Stanley
 David Steger
 Lee Tolliver, Jr.
 Chris Toone
 Michael Wade
 Ralph Walker
 Bruce Weaver
 Reginald White
 Eugene Wiginton
 Charles Wiley, Sr.
 Vance Willis
 Merlin Winckler
 Stuart Wood
 Willis Wyatt, Jr.
 Douglas Young

er Hall of Fame

Master Level II

Jeffery Beard
Gary Harmon
Carl Knauer
Philip Morgan, Jr.
Jerry Simms
Frazier Streich
Earlie Worrell

Master Level III

Gary Harmon

Creel Award

Barry Stafford - 28 Sunfish, 1 Chain Pickerel, and 4 Yellow Perch

Expert Anglers

Largemouth Bass
Arthur Armbruster, Jr.
Roy Bowen
Kenneth Church, Jr.
David Coles, Jr.
Thomas Conley
Russell Hall, Jr.
Mark Heatwole
Brian Hill
John Huckstep, IV
Chip Jones
Brian Kearns
Elwood Lam
Sam Moody, III
James Parcell
Mark Perdue
David Pleasants
Dan Smith
Robert Smith
Mickey Southall
John Sweeney, Sr.
Gary Wheeler

Smallmouth Bass
John Cubbage
Eugene Frey
John Hansen
Luke Hudson
John Moser
Todd Pitsenberger
Cliff Songer
Roger Woodson

Rock Bass

Wayne Ferguson
Steve Ferguson, Sr.
Kindred Magette

Sunfish

G. Ballard, Jr.
Roy Griffith, Jr.
Roy Harnington
Stephen Helvin
Glenn Liverman
Marty Porter
Gregory Rose
Barry Stafford
James Utley, Jr.
Michael Wade
Frederick Willis, Jr.

White Bass

Rassie Wright Sr.

Striped Bass

Oscar Keen
Michael King
Macky May

Blue Catfish

Jeffrey Applewhite
Dwight Barnett
Rondal Coffey
Ketrena Edwards
Michael Erwin
Dennis Fitzgerald
Hal Hampton, Jr.
Meaghan Henshaw
Joseph Hodges, Jr.
David Huffman
Dean Irwin
Vernon Joyce
Joseph Lackey, Sr.
Walter Leber
James Lindsay
James Miller, Jr.
Charles Morris, Sr.
Paul Ray
Tommy Ray
Terry Ward
David Weeks
Louis Williams, Sr.

Flathead Catfish

Phillip Roark, Sr.
Gary Smith
Jerry Thornton

Rainbow Trout

Robert Brown
Paul Hale
Philip Morgan, Jr.

Brook Trout

Ben Chaplin, Jr.
Kevin Compton
Richard Deeds, Sr.
Dennis Grimm
Stephen Morgan
Roy Ogle
William Rector
Steven Richards
Tony Ritchie
James Sasser
Anthony Showker
Craig Wolfe

Brown Trout

Phillip Morgan, Jr.

Chain Pickerel

Julian Ruffin

Walleye

Charles Daniel

Yellow Perch

Harold Bowden
Andrew Bower
William Brandon
Dorothy Brandon
William Butler
Donald Chervenak, Jr.
Christopher Craft
Roy Griffith, Jr.
Meredith Lynn
Jerald Mercer
Thomas Polk
Val Rapp, Jr.
William Stanley
Christopher Young

Gar

Mary Stickler



The Water

by Jim Crosby, Region 4 Boater Education Coordinator

Do You Have to Register or Title Your Boat?

In Virginia, some boat owners have to title and register their boats, and some do not. A bit of confusion sometimes exists around this question and some of the definitions used in the Code. I will attempt to explain!

The Code of Virginia states in Section 29.1-703, "Every motorboat on the public waters of this Commonwealth shall be numbered (registered and issued a Certificate Of Number) except those specifically exempt in Section 29.1-710. No person shall operate or give permission for the operation of any motorboat on such waters unless the motorboat is numbered in accordance with this chapter, federal law, or a federally approved numbering system of another state, or has been issued a temporary registration certificate pursuant to the provisions of Section 29.1-703.1.

The exemptions include: a boat registered in another state temporarily operating in Virginia; a boat from another country temporarily operating in Virginia; a boat used in a governmental function of the United States, a state or a subdivision of the state; a ship's lifeboat; a documented vessel; a racing boat; and a motorboat for which a temporary registration certificate has been issued.

A Certificate Of Title and a Certificate of Number are required for all watercraft propelled by machinery, including gasoline, diesel, and electric motors except as exempted above. In addition, vessels operated by sail power only that are in excess

of 18 feet are also required to be titled.

The title is legal proof of ownership of the watercraft and requires the payment of a titling fee and the state's watercraft sales tax. The registration (Certificate of Number) is proof that you have paid the registration fee and have been issued a number to be displayed on both sides of the forward half of the vessel. Generally, the number never changes once it is issued. A decal and wallet card attest to the validity of the registration that expires every three years.

Your title should be secured along with your other legal documents. The registration card must be onboard when the vessel is in operation. If you relate this to owning and operating a motor vehicle, the titles serve the same purposes; the Certificate of Number wallet card is the same as the Registration Card and the bow number and decals serve the same purpose as the license plate on your automobile.

The improper display of the bow number is a common error that boat owners make.

The rules and regulations of the Board of the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries state: "The number issued to your watercraft must be displayed on each side of the bow of the vessel in block letters, at least three inches in height, and contrasting in color with the hull or background. They can be painted or attached to the watercraft, must read from left to right and must always be legible. A space or hyphen must separate both the VA symbol and the letter suffix from the numbers."

All of this information is available in a Department publication titled *Virginia Watercraft Owner's Guide*. A must for Virginia boat owners, you can obtain one by calling 804-367-9369, or find where they are available in your area by calling, toll-free, 1-877-898-2628. This information is also available on the VDGIF web site at: www.dgif.stateva.us. □



© Dwight Dyke



RECIPES

by Joan Cone

Spring Panfish

May is a wonderful month for panfish, including crappie, bluegills, and perch. Any of these can be filleted. This eliminates bones and lets you enjoy the following recipe.

You will also discover this menu utilizes such springtime treats as morels, crabmeat, asparagus, and strawberries. All of these are available now in Virginia.

Menu

Crab-Stuffed Cherry Tomatoes

Panfish With Morels

Mashed Potatoes Anna

Asparagus With Mustard Sauce

Strawberry and Kiwi Cheesecake

Crab-Stuffed Cherry Tomatoes

15 ripe cherry tomatoes, washed

1/4 pound backfin crabmeat

2 teaspoons plain, low fat yogurt

1 teaspoon parsley, chopped

1/2 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce

1/8 teaspoon seafood seasoning

White pepper and pinch of salt
to taste

Paprika

Core tops of tomatoes and set aside. Combine remaining ingredients, except paprika, and mix gently. Spoon mixture into tomatoes, filling about 1/2 inch over tomato tops. Sprinkle lightly with paprika. Serve cold or hot. To heat, bake in a preheated 375°F. oven for ten minutes.

Variations: Filling can be used to stuff celery and to serve on crackers.

Panfish With Morels

16 to 24 panfish fillets

Flour

Salt and freshly ground pepper

2 tablespoons butter

2 tablespoons vegetable oil

8 to 12 morel mushrooms or other
fresh mushrooms, sliced

Add desired amount of salt and pepper to flour. Dust the fillets with seasoned flour. Heat the butter and oil over medium-high heat in a large skillet. Sauté the mushrooms until limp, placing them on a warm platter. Quickly cook the fillets just minutes per side and serve them topped with the morels.

Mashed Potatoes Anna

2 pounds russet potatoes, peeled
and cut into 2-inch cubes

1 cup milk

4 tablespoons butter

1/3 cup half and half cream

Salt and freshly ground pepper
to taste

In a large saucepan, cover the potatoes with cold water. Bring to a boil, partially cover, and cook for 20 minutes or until potatoes are tender. Scald the milk. Drain potatoes and mash them in the cooking pot with a potato masher or electric beater. Turn on the heat and gradually beat in the hot milk, butter and cream. Season with salt and freshly ground pepper and serve immediately. Serves 4.

Asparagus With Mustard Sauce

1 sheet (18x24-inches) heavy duty
aluminum foil

2 pounds asparagus, trimmed

3 tablespoons butter or margarine

Salt and pepper

Sauce:

1 cup light sour cream

2 tablespoons red wine vinegar

1/4 cup Dijon mustard

2 teaspoons sugar

1/8 teaspoon crushed red pepper

Preheat oven to 450° F. Center asparagus on sheet of heavy duty alu-

minum foil; top with butter. Bring up sides of foil and double fold. Double fold ends to form one large foil packet, leaving room for heat circulation inside packet. Bake 14 to 16 minutes on a cookie sheet in oven.

Combine sour cream, vinegar, mustard, sugar, and red pepper in small microwave-safe bowl to make sauce. Microwave on HIGH 1 1/2 to 2 minutes or until warm. Serve sauce over asparagus. Makes 6 to 8 servings.

Strawberry and Kiwi Cheesecake

8 ounces ricotta cheese

8 ounces 2% cottage cheese

2/3 cup sugar

1 large egg

1/4 cup light sour cream

2 tablespoons flour

1 tablespoon lemon juice

1 teaspoon lemon rind

Crust:

1 1/2 cups graham wafer crumbs

2 tablespoons sugar

1 tablespoon butter or margarine,
melted

2 tablespoons water

Garnish:

2 kiwifruit, sliced

1 cup sliced strawberries

Preheat oven to 350° F. In a bowl, combine graham crumbs, sugar, butter, and water; mix well. Pat onto sides and bottom of a 8-inch springform pan and refrigerate. In food processor, combine ricotta, cottage cheese, sugar and egg and process until completely smooth. Add sour cream, flour, lemon juice, and rind and process until well combined. Pour into pan and bake for 35 minutes or until set around edge but still slightly loose in center. Let cool and then refrigerate until well chilled. Garnish cake with kiwifruit and strawberries. Makes 8 to 10 servings. □

My Backyard Wild

by Marlene A. Condon



Poison Ivy

Although I often encourage "volunteer" plants to grow to maturity in my yard, there is one that is not at all welcome: poison ivy (*Toxicodendron radicans* or *Rhus radicans*). This vining plant is very common throughout Virginia, and it is a good wildlife plant. However, all parts of this plant are highly irritating to most people's skin, causing severe itching, burning, and redness that may require a visit to the doctor.

Poison ivy has small inconspicuous blooms that, after fertilization, produce a waxy-white fruit that many birds and small mammals eat throughout the fall. But you should learn to recognize the three pointed leaves that are often shiny and alternate along the stem. Then you can get rid of this plant while it is young and it has not had a chance to grow long roots that are difficult to thoroughly remove from the soil.

I have found the safest way to remove poison ivy is with a shovel so that you do not have to get very close to it. You will need a long-sleeved shirt, long pants, an inexpensive pair of plastic or latex gloves and a sponge you throw away afterwards. Before getting started, prepare a bucket of soapy water and place a trash bag into a trash can.

After digging out the plant, place it carefully into the trash bag, trying not to touch any part of the plant to the rim of the bag. Next sponge off the entire shovel well with the soapy water to remove any traces of resin. You can let the shovel dry in the sun.

Now throw the sponge and the pair of gloves into the trash bag with the poison ivy and tie it up for a trip to the landfill. (Never burn poison ivy because the smoke will contain the poisonous resin.)

Immediately remove your clothing and wash it as soon as is possible (but not with other clothes unless you are quite confident that the clothes you were wearing did not come into contact with the poison ivy). Wash your skin well with soap and water before 30 minutes has passed to avoid penetration of any resin into your skin.

These measures will also work for the less-commonly encountered poison oak (*Toxicodendron quercifolium*) and poison sumac (*Toxicodendron vernix* or *Rhus vernix*). □



Above: Many kinds of birds eat the small, waxy white fruit of poison ivy. Top right: When small, a poison ivy plant can resemble a young oak tree. Middle: The distinctive large hairy roots of poison ivy can often be seen on large trees. Bottom: The fall color of poison ivy can be quite attractive. Photos ©Marlene A. Condon.



Naturally, Wild



story and illustration
by Spike Knuth

Golden-winged Warbler

Vermivora chrysoptera

May in Virginia finds a multitude of colorful wild flowers, flowering shrubs and trees, and woodlands full of migrating warblers. Later in the month you might get a glimpse of one of the most distinctive, although uncommon, warblers. The golden-winged warbler is not apt to be seen along with other migrating warblers. However, it does breed in Virginia's western mountains, from the Alleghanies to the Cumberlands and southern Appalachians.

The golden-winged warbler (*Vermivora*-“worm-eating,” *chrysoptera*-“golden-winged”) male has a lemon yellow forehead and crown, gray to bluish-gray back, and yellow wing patches. It has a black throat patch and black cheeks and lores surrounded by white. Its undersides are dull whitish, and the bird measures about five inches. The call of this warbler is almost an insect-like buzz, consisting of a series of 4 or 5 notes, starting with a high-pitched “see,” followed by “buzz-buzz-buzz-buzz.”

This is a bird that prefers borders of clearings in deciduous woodlands, especially hillsides, but also along stream edges, low wet areas, overgrown clear cuts, old

grown-up pastures, and recovering burned-over areas. Danny Harrington, wildlife biologist assistant, who manages the Clinch Mountain WMA, noted recently that golden-winged warblers were found on one of the area's mountainsides after a burn off. This caused quite a stir among the birding fraternity, and they visited the area regularly.

The golden-winged warbler is apt to be seen anywhere in their desired habitat, feeding on the ground in dense brush, or high in a tree, or hanging upside down at the ends of branches, seeking caterpillars and small insects. Often they fly up after flying insects like a flycatcher.

Golden-winged warblers nest either on the ground or close to it, often in a clump of goldenrod or other herbaceous plants. The nest is usually a bulky, foundational mass of old leaves with a neat cup of grasses, rootlets, and are frequently lined with hard fibers of reddish-brown grapevine bark. They have only one brood, and incubation and fledging takes less than a month. By late August these birds are already heading south to Guatemala, Columbia, and Venezuela.

The golden-winged warbler, along with the blue-winged warbler, is a member of a peculiar group of warblers that interbreed. The blue-winged and the golden-winged seem to mate indiscriminately and produce fertile offspring, namely the Lawrence's and Brewster's warblers. □



It's 8 a.m. Do you know who your children are?

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